

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated February 10, 2006, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections of the claims. The withdrawal of the previous grounds of rejection is noted with appreciation.

Claim 5 was identified as being allowable. Pursuant thereto, the subject matter of claim 5, including intervening claim 4, has been rewritten in independent form, as new claim 19.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 14 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103, on the grounds that they were considered to be unpatentable over the Cummins et al patent (U.S. 5,980,011) in view of the newly-cited Ju patent (U.S. 5,806,992). The remaining claims were rejected on the basis of these two patents, in view of various tertiary references. For the reasons presented below, it is respectfully submitted that the Cummins and Ju patents do not suggest the subject matter of the currently pending claims to a person of ordinary skill in the art, even when considered in view of the additional references.

The Cummins patent was cited for its disclosure of ink-jet printing on a card medium. As noted in the Office Action, however, the Cummins patent does not disclose a controller for controlling a printing head in accordance with information provided by a video camera. To this end, therefore, reliance is made upon the Ju patent.

The Ju patent is concerned with the effect that the thickness of the recording medium, e.g. paper, may have on the quality of the printed image. In the context of ink-jet printing, it is desirable to maintain a certain gap between the printing head and the printed sheet, to ensure quality (column 2, lines 11-22). In pursuit of this

objective, the Ju patent discloses an optical sensor 140 for determining the thickness of the sheet. In response to the sensed thickness, the height of the recording head is adjusted to maintain the desired gap between the head and the surface of the sheet.

In contrast to this disclosed arrangement, the pending claims are directed to a card printing machine in which a computer-aided vision device, including a video camera, determines the areas on the card in which printing is to be carried out. For instance, a credit or debit card may have a magnetic stripe containing information about the card-holder's account. The printing should not cover the area of the magnetic stripe. In another example, a contact-type smart card can have an electronic module with electrical contacts that are flush with the surface of the card. Again, printing should not be conducted over the area of the contacts, so that they can establish good electrical connection with a card reader. In the claimed machine, the information provided by the video camera is used to discriminate between those areas in which printing should be performed, and where it should not be performed. Based upon this information, the controller causes the inkjet head to print on only those areas in which printing is desired, as the card medium passes by the print head.

It is respectfully submitted that the Ju patent does not suggest the claimed subject matter to a person of ordinary skill in the art, even if it is combined with the disclosure of the Cummins patent. At best, the combined teachings of the two references would result in a system in which the *height* of an inkjet print head is adjusted in accordance with the sensed thickness of the card medium. There is no

suggestion to control the *area* of the card on which printing is performed, in accordance with information that is provided by a video camera.

For at least this reason, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 14 and 16-18 are patentably distinct from the disclosures of the Cummins and Ju patents, whether considered individually or in combination. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that the tertiary references do not provide any teachings that would overcome this distinction. Accordingly, the remaining claims are likewise submitted to be patentable over the prior art of record.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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